Cost of cargo handling at Cochin Port Trust

4700. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROADS TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cost of handling cargo at Cochin Port Trust is very high as compared to its competitor port in Colombo;

(b) if so, the reasons for the high cost of handling and the efforts made to reduce the same; and

(c) the estimated business the port is losing in view of the high cost per year?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The tariff for handling cargo in Cochin Port is not comparatively higher than those of Colombo Port. Service-wise comparison for the tariff levied at these two ports is however, not-possible since the categorization and constitution of tariff schedules for various services rendered by these ports are not similar. The Ministry issued revised guidelines to the Tariff Authority for Major Ports (TAMP) in 2005 for fixation of tariff. The salient features are as under:

(i) A cap of 15% prescribed on return on capital employed by major port trusts/private operators.

(ii) Royalty/revenue share payable by private operator to landlord port is not allowed as pass through in tariff so that users will not bear the burden.

(iii) Rates fixed by TAMP Act as ceiling. Ports/operators have flexibility to reduce the tariff or allow discounts based on the commercial requirements.

(iv) Users not responsible for delays caused by the port/operator.

(v) Composite pilotage fees are unbundled so that users will pay only for those services availed by them.

(vi) Three tier sliding pilotage fee prescribed with lower rates for bigger vessels.

(vii) Concessional tariff is prescribed for handling trans-shipment containers in order to promote trans-shipment at Indian ports.

(c) No business loss to Cochin Port on account of higher tariff has been reported.

Roads under CRF in Tamil Nadu

4701. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for construction of new roads or upgradation of existing roads in the Theni district of Tamil Nadu under Central Road Fund (CRF) has been considered or sanctioned during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of pending projects/completed under CRF in Tamil Nadu during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The following two proposals were sanctioned in Theni District during last three years under Central Road Fund:

(i) Widening and Strengthening of Palayam-Thevaram-Bodi road (26.4 km) and

(ii) Bridge at km 6/200 of link road from Andipatti meeting Jayamangalam-Andipatti road at km 4/200.

(c) A total of 103 works have been completed during the last three years, 6 works are in progress and 82 works are yet to be started.

Condition of Pathankot-Jammu NH

4702. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the condition of National Highway between Pathankot and Jammu is very poor causing extreme inconvenience to road users, and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and by when the condition of National Highway in this stretch is likely to improve?